



Students' Representative Council - Meeting Minutes
March 19th, 2025
Beveridge Forum

In the Acadia Students' Union, we acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We recognize that we are all treaty people and have commitments to each other and the land in which we live, learn, work, and play upon. As a Students' Union, we commit ourselves to continuous learning about how we can engage in meaningful action towards truth, reconciliation, and justice.

Present

President, Yash Gahlot (voting) P
Vice-President Academic and External Affairs, Sam Taylor (voting) P
Vice-President Events and Promotions, Zahide Çam (voting) P
Arts Senator, Genna Beed (voting) P
Science Senator, Julia Shirokov (voting) P
Councilor-at-large, Treyvon Nicolls (voting)
Community Relations Representative, Cyenna Link (voting) P
Vice-President Finance and Operations, Archit Singh (voting) P
Vice-President Student Life, Sterling Shannon (voting) P

Absences

Sustainability Representative, Carmen Peng (voting)
Professional Studies Senator, Sophia Carpenter (voting)
Councilor-at-large, Emma Boles (voting)

Resources

Chair of Council, Ben McCulley (non-voting) P
Vice-Chair of Council, Gretchen Archibald (non-voting) P

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:13 PM ADT.



2. Roll Call

3. Adoption of Agenda and Previous Minutes

BIRT the agenda be approved as presented.

Moved by Zahide

Seconded by Yash

Motion approved

BIRT the March 10th Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

Moved by Zahide

Seconded by Cyenna

Motion approved

BIRT the Professional Studies Senator, Sophia Carpenter be excused from the March 19th SRC meeting.

Moved by Julia

Seconded by Genna

Motion approved

BIRT the Sustainability Representative Carmen Peng be excused from the March 19th SRC meeting.

Moved by Cyenna

Seconded by Yash

Motion approved

4. Presentations

5. Standing Items – Skipped due to special council meeting

a) Committee Chairs

b) President

c) Chair of Council

6. Unfinished Business

a) Protest Policy

Zahide presented the rest of the protest policy as per Appendix A and discussed the changes they wish to make.



BIRT the SRC endorse the proposed changes to the Acadia University “Campus Protests and Demonstrations” Policy as outlined in Appendix A.

Moved by Zahide

Seconded by Emma

Motion approved

7. New Business

For Discussion

For Decision

8. In-Camera

9. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM ADT.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: March 24th, 5:30-7pm in the Beveridge Forum



APPENDIX A

Introduction

This document was created in consultation with students from Acadia University who expressed dissatisfaction with the protest policy approved on August 31, 2024. A working group designated by the Acadia Student Union (ASU) reviewed these concerns and used them to create the following list of demands for changes to the protest policy.

Students across the campus gathered to reflect on Acadia University's protest policy and to voice their concerns outlined in this document. Before presenting the specific proposed changes, it is important to emphasize that students do not agree with the creation and implementation of this protest policy without prior notice, consultation with the student body, or the involvement of the University Senate. Acadia University students are deeply concerned about the implications of this procedure, as it restricts fundamental rights on campus. The lack of communication, transparency, and accountability in this matter poses a significant threat to academic freedom.

The Acadia University campus should fundamentally serve as a hub for sharing ideas and engaging in diverse debates. Students worry that the current protest policy may silence critical voices and act as a mechanism of institutional control on Campus.

A clear, reasonable, and ethically grounded protest policy should be developed through a deeply democratic deliberative process. This will ensure that Acadia University fosters an environment where open exchange of ideas and respectful discourse are both encouraged and supported while also guaranteeing security for all who engage peacefully. Such a policy must uphold, protect, and promote the rights of students.

Therefore, students at Acadia University suggest the following changes to the current protest policy, advocating for clear and transparent guidelines for implementing protest policies. This commitment reflects a dedication to promoting open discourse and ensuring that any restrictions imposed are fair, proportionate, and transparent rather than vague and nonspecific, as outlined in the existing policy.

Proposed new policy draft

1. Purpose



Acadia University is committed to fostering an environment where the open exchange of ideas and respectful discourse are encouraged and supported. This policy outlines the expectations for students, faculty, staff, and the university regarding protests and/or demonstrations on campus.

2. Policy Statement

Acadia University encourages all members of the university community to have active voices in advocating for change and engaging in discussions on important issues. The university will protect the right to peaceful and lawful protest and demonstration on campus as a vital part of freedom of expression and the democratic process.

3. Guidelines for Protests and Demonstrations

- A protest or demonstration is a public act of objection, disapproval, or dissent. Protests and demonstrations take place in both physical and online spaces.
- Protests and demonstrations must be conducted following the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.

4. No Disciplinary Action for Participation

- No student will face disciplinary action from the university on the basis of their participation in a protest or demonstration, provided that the student complies with this policy.
- No student will face disciplinary action from the university based on the actions of other participants in a protest or demonstration.
- Faculty and staff who participate in protests or demonstrations on campus must do so in compliance with this policy and their existing employment contracts and collective agreements. In any instance where this policy and a collective agreement are in conflict, the latter shall prevail.**
 - The university will not interfere with a protest or demonstration unless there is a legitimate threat to the rights or safety of others as defined in the "Standards of Conduct" section in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.

5. Rights and Responsibilities

5.1. University Administration



- The university administration will apply this policy equitably and with respect for the rights of individuals involved, following the procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
 - The university administration will protect the right of students, faculty, and staff to participate in protests and demonstrations that are consistent with this policy.
 - The University administration will communicate clearly about applications of this policy with members of the Acadia University community.

5.2. Safety and Security

- Safety and Security is responsible for ensuring the safety of all participants and bystanders during protests and demonstrations.
- Safety and Security employees who respond to violations of the protest policy will have received comprehensive training on human rights, de-escalation strategies, and their responsibilities within this policy.
- Safety and security will respond to reports of violations of the protest policy. If safety and security are present at any protest in response to a report of a violation, they will not instigate aggression towards protestors or attempt to instigate violence. Safety and security will use proportionate actions towards protestors who violate this policy.

5.3. Participants in a Protest or Demonstration

- Members of the Acadia University community have the right to participate in peaceful and lawful protests and demonstrations on the Acadia University campus that follow the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- In the case that a participant in a protest or demonstration believes this policy has not been applied equitably they have the right to follow the appeals process in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- As outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct, “All students have the responsibility to contribute to the creation of a community that prioritizes the well-being of self and others as a primary priority.” This responsibility includes the requirement that students “create an environment that ends speech and actions of hate and discrimination”. This section of the code of conduct protects the rights of participants in a protest or demonstration to interfere with hateful or discriminatory speech or actions through the use of protest or demonstration. Under the code of conduct, students are also required to “be accepting of the diverse beliefs in the Acadia community”. In this way, the code of conduct differentiates between restrictions on hate speech and respect for free speech.



6. Non-Compliance

- Non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with through procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- If interim sanctions are applied under the procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct, students will be informed of the reason for the applied interim sanctions.

7. Review and Amendments

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of Safety and Security. Amendments to this policy will be made in consultation with the Acadia Students' Union, and all employee groups, and in alignment with the university's commitment to freedom of expression, the open exchange of ideas and institutional transparency.
- Acadia community members and groups can at any time propose amendments to this policy to the Office of Safety and Security.

8. Exclusions

This policy does not apply to strikes, lockouts, or any action that falls within the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable laws, provincial regulations, and collective agreements.

**We request that this section of the policy be reviewed with all university employee groups as the disciplinary procedures that would be used to enforce this policy fall under the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct which does not apply to employees making disciplinary measures for employees unclear.

Reasons for changes

Note: section numbers reference the original protest policy

Section 1- This policy should also outline expectations for the university not just expectations for participants in protests.

Section 2- The university should protect the right to protest, not just support it. This turns this policy into one that affirms rights rather than seeks to restrict and control them under the guise of affirming rights.

Section 3.1- This should be removed, as there already exists precedent that the right to freedom of assembly does not include the right to impede or obstruct lawful activities on their property and the student code of conduct already prohibits violence, threats of force or violence, endangering the safety of others, damaging property and interfering with expressive freedoms of others. We replaced 3.1 with a simple definition of protest because any attempt to define a



peaceful protest presents a risk of misinterpretation and abuse. Instead, we believe the policy should define when the university is allowed to interfere with protests which is in line with the way major human rights organizations discuss protest rights.

3.2 - Disrupting or impeding the regular business of a university is the purpose of a protest. This may be misinterpreted to mean that students cannot stage a class walkout, as that substantially disrupts the regular business of the university. This section should be removed, as there already exists precedent that the right to freedom of assembly does not include the right to impede or obstruct lawful activities on their property.¹

3.3- There are no grounds to disallow protest at certain times or days. As cited in the last section, the university already has the legal right to disallow gatherings that disrupt the lawful actions of others. Vaguely stating this allows bad actors to co-opt the article.

¹ Guelph (City) v. Soltys, No. 636/09 (Superior Court of Justice August 13, 2009).

3.4- This should be changed to “provided that the student complies with this policy”. Individuals are incapable of controlling the actions of others and shouldn’t be collectively punished for bad actors. Students should not be punished for the actions of others and allowing this section of the policy would constitute collective punishment.

4.1- For the third time, the university already has the legal right to disallow gatherings that disrupt the lawful actions of others. This section is rehashed for the third time and should be removed. Instead, this section should be defined by the rights that students have to an appeal process if they feel they have been unfairly sanctioned.

4.2- The word neutrality should not be used as neutrality does not exist and choosing to be neutral sides with the status quo and/or the oppressor. Equity is more appropriate here as it requires fairness and that individual circumstances are taken into account. 4.3- These changes are necessary as the current policy presumes that protests will violate the policy and require the presence of safety and security. S&S already has the ability to intervene if violence is occurring anywhere on campus so there should be no need for them to be automatically present at a protest unless they have very good reason to believe their presence is required. S&S employees also need proper training to handle protests safely. Often, violence at protests occurs due to the presence of law enforcement which is why the sentence prohibiting S&S from instigating aggression is necessary.

5.-This section is threatening and unnecessary. Instead, it should refer to the code of conduct procedures. Protestors should be given a reason for interim sanctions to make sure that they understand what they did to earn interim sanctions and to add a level of assurance that the possibility for interim sanctions is not abused.

6.- We added that amendments should be made with institutional transparency in mind as this was clearly a problem with the creation of this policy. As the policy stands, only safety and security can propose amendments to the policy. We want anyone at Acadia to be able to propose amendments at any time.



